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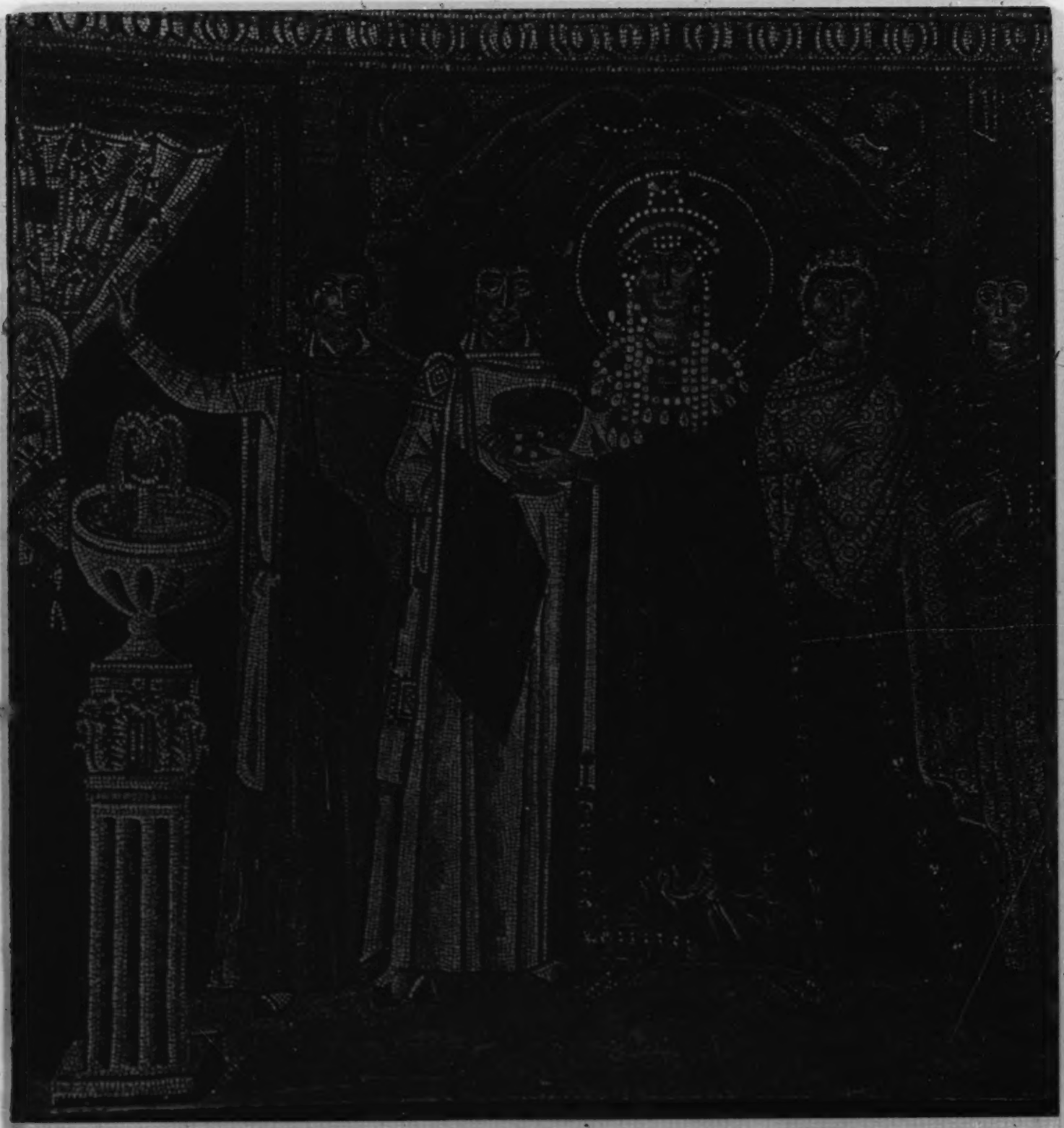


RAVENNA MOSAICS

THE ARTS COUNCIL

S. VITALE: *The Empress Theodora and her suite* (No. 40)

Foreword

EVEN TO THE FORTUNATE who have visited Ravenna and seen the mosaics *in situ*, this exhibition will come as a revelation; whilst to others it will introduce an art seldom practised in this country, and rarely with any true appreciation of the medium. The first will be able to see more closely and more clearly many pictures which are half hidden, or difficult to decipher owing to the dim light in some of the buildings which they adorn. The mosaics of this exhibition should not be regarded just as copies for they are more, and it is only after a century of experience in the work of preservation and restoration that the mosaic-workers of Ravenna have learnt many of the secrets and subtleties of this early Christian art, which, whilst it has never ceased to be produced in Italy, had in competition with fresco painting and easel pictures become thoroughly debased by the nineteenth century. The new understanding and rediscovery of the art, which is the result of these years of devoted study and technical experience are well summed up by Professor Bovini in the last paragraph of his interesting introduction.

Whilst colour and rhythm are essential characteristics of this great mural art, it is primarily an art of reflected light. The mosaic artists of the early Christian churches did far more than merely decorate areas of flat wall. They produced an entirely new spatial effect which is unique and which it is interesting to contrast with the work of the stained glass designers of the later periods, who use not reflected but direct light. We should, however, remember when we visit this exhibition that it has not been possible to reproduce the conditions of light of the various churches in which the original mosaics are to be found, and that whilst we have gained here a certain visibility, we have possibly lost something of solemnity and mystery.

The Arts Council are indebted to H.E. the Italian Ambassador, Signor Manlio Brosio, through whose personal interest it has been possible to show this exhibition in England. Especial thanks are due to Professor Giuseppe Bovini, Inspector to the Superintendent of the Monuments of Ravenna, who is a member of the Organization Committee in Italy, to Doctor Celso Cicognani, Syndic of Ravenna, and President of the Exhibition Committee, to members of the Committee, to Professor Giuseppe Salietti, Director of the Mosaicists of Ravenna, and to the other scientific collaborators and copyists. Count Antonio Saffi of the Italian Institute has given constant help in administrative details. We are also grateful to Dr L. J. F. Wijsenbeek, Director of the Municipal Museum of The Hague, who has given us helpful information and advice over the mounting of the exhibition. Dr Johannes Itten, Director of the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Zurich, has kindly

lent the blocks for the Frontispiece and Plates II, III, VI, X, XI, XII. Photographs reproduced here are by Alinari (Plate I), Anderson (Plate V), Trapani (Plates III, VIII, IX, X, XI), and Villani (Plates II, IV, VI, VII, XII), and are reproduced by kind permission of the photographers.

PHILIP JAMES

Technical Note

THESE MOSAIC REPLICAS are the work of a few Ravenna artists, who have recently formed the *Bottega del Mosaico*, and of some students of the *Accademia di Belle Arti di Ravenna*. They are exact and faithful copies. For their execution, it is necessary first to make tracings of the original mosaics, reproducing the exact design made by the single *tesserae*, and at the same time copying faithfully the colours in all their infinite gradations. At the 'Bottega' these tracings act as the basis for the reproduction of the selected subjects, and small *tesserae* are then cut from different pieces of material containing all the colours and their various shades in dimension and tonality perfectly matching the original. These are then inserted into a bed of lime in an arrangement identical with the original mosaic. This laborious task, which naturally requires a great deal of time, because of the precision which is needed, does not only achieve an exact reproduction of the shape and shade of each stone, but the angle of the original pieces is also reproduced, as is the depth to which they have been pressed into the wall by the thumbs of the ancient artists. In the mosaics of Ravenna, the *tesserae* are not laid on an even bed in a uniform manner, but the levels differ slightly. The surface, therefore, with the exception of those parts that are gilded, is rough and uneven. The light is not reflected as from a mirror, but is broken, and, according to the angle of the observer's vision, the *tesserae*, though so small, shine or are dull, are hidden or twinkle in a continuous movement, which gives the impression of something alive, palpitating and ever changing.

Ravenna Mosaics

BY GIUSEPPE BOVINI

Inspector to the Superintendent of the Monuments of Ravenna

FOR THE ART LOVER and the art historian Ravenna is the city of mosaics, for no other town in the world preserves so large a number of them in such good condition. These are almost all in sacred buildings of the fifth and sixth centuries, belonging to a period which was the golden age of the now silent city of the Adriatic, which owed its fortunes and its magnificence to its geographical position. There, because of its natural fortifications and its security, the Emperor Honorius transferred the capital of the Western Empire.

In the course of time and through mishaps, many mosaics have been almost entirely destroyed, as for example those which decorated the churches of S. Giovanni Evangelista, S. Croce, S. Maria Maggiore, S. Agata and others; through good fortune, however, many other churches have preserved undamaged and almost intact their original decoration. This is the reason for their very great importance in early Christian and Byzantine art, since we find in them a complete and indispensable record, whereby we can trace with confidence the development of mural decoration, and can determine what artistic influences were responsible for the art of mosaic in the fifth and sixth centuries after Christ.

The So-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia

THE OLDEST SACRED EDIFICE in Ravenna to be decorated with mosaics is probably the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, a small cruciform building, which according to a tradition, which is lost in legend, is the burial place of the distinguished sister of Honorius. This tradition referred to a chapel, which about the middle of the fifth century was within the narthex of the imperial church of S. Croce and was thereby part of the buildings ascribed to Placidia.

The exterior of this small sanctuary, which should probably be identified with the ancient *Monasterium Sancti Laurentii Formosi*, as with all the sacred buildings of Ravenna, is extremely modest in appearance and is a simple construction built of short thick bricks. The interior, on the contrary, discloses in a quiet half-light a wealth of decoration and a magnificence which is entirely unexpected.

Immediately above the broad band of marble which surrounds the interior and forms

the decorative base of the vaults and of the lunettes, comes the mosaic decoration which covers the whole of the remaining surfaces. Here we find not some fragments of mosaic but a complete composition, perfect in its harmony and one which enables us to realize clearly the effect which early Christian mosaic was intended to produce. The decoration is remarkable not only for the range of its colours, but also for the choice of subjects, and for the skilful use of perspective so that, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, Ambrogio Traversari could declare that he had never seen a finer or more beautiful mosaic, *musivum nusquam neque tenius, neque elegantius inspeximus.*

In the twilight which bathes the interior, the deep blue of the composition predominates which here and there is lit up by a pale blue light. This light does not interrupt the gentle glow of the dark background, but rather reveals it and brings it out to greater advantage. When we reach the centre of the sanctuary, our eye is instinctively raised up to the cupola, which springs from lofty pendentives. On this vaulting, above the four symbols of the evangelists, is depicted a dark nocturnal sky shimmering with myriad golden stars ranged concentrically around a golden Latin cross.

On the lunettes under the dome, beneath large shell-like shapes, appear, like spectres, eight white figures of men. They stand out against the deep blue background which becomes green towards the base. These are the Apostles, among whom can be distinguished by their features, consecrated by iconographic tradition, Peter (No. 3) and Paul (No. 2). Close to these eight figures in white, small vases stand in green meadows, which are approached by doves (Nos. 6 and 7), or on which they perch drinking (No. 8).

The four other Apostles, which for reasons of symmetry are not depicted on the lunettes, appear in pairs resplendent in gold, on the eastern and western side vaults of the chapel (the axis of the building lies north and south). Each stands on an elegant pinnacle made of leaves in the centre of a rich pattern of vines, which rise in diminishing coils, and which at the apex surround a garland containing the monogram of Christ flanked by the Apocalyptic letters A and Ω (Alpha and Omega).

The north and south vaults of the sanctuary, which were unsuited for narrative compositions, were adorned with ornamental motives, thus showing how the decoration was adapted to the architecture. Across each vault stretches a kind of delicate Oriental carpet, deep blue in colour and diapered with white stars, crosses, little roses with red centres, and round white flowers surrounded by rings of blue and gold (No. 9).

The intrados of the arches, which support the cupola, are decorated with three bands of Greek key pattern which shine with the colours of the rainbow. Elsewhere there are green and white nets, edged with gold (No. 10), or rich festoons of red fruits and green leaves springing from circular baskets woven in gold, (No. 5).

The eastern and western lunettes have a decorative and symbolical character and are practically similar. On the same deep blue background are two branches of acanthus edged with green and illuminated with gold, which with their symmetrical spirals form an arabesque pattern filling the whole space. They spring from the sides of a small

rippling pond, surrounded by grass. Towards this limpid water, in the midst of the multi-coloured spirals of acanthus leaf, approach, one from each side, two thirsty deer with branching antlers. This deeply symbolical scene represents the souls sighing for God according to Psalm XLII (1–2): "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God".

The lunette which faces the entrance, at the end of the northern arm, is descriptive rather than symbolical in character. Here is seen a man, dressed in white, with a cross on his right shoulder, and an open book in his left hand, who walks towards the centre of the composition, where there is a grill surrounded with flames. On the other side is a cupboard with open doors, where we can see the four books of the Evangelists. There has been considerable discussion, and some quite recently, as to the identification of the man bearing the cross. The most likely explanation is that this figure represents the Roman martyr St Lawrence, who is said to have suffered martyrdom by being burnt on a grill. He is shown with the attributes proper to the rank of a deacon to which he belonged, the processional cross and the book of Psalms, hastening towards the instrument of his martyrdom, ready to give his life for the Faith.

The subject represented on the lunette over the entrance is again symbolical. Here we see a delightful pastoral scene, smiling and gentle, in a golden and blue light. Christ, robed in a golden tunic and in a purple mantle, is seated on a rock; he leans with his left hand on a cross, and with a gracious gesture caresses one of his flock with his right hand. Three sheep stand on each side beside him in a hilly landscape, enlivened with trees, grass and bushes, and bathed in a delicate blue morning atmosphere, (No. 1).

What is most striking in the interior of this small but enchanting building is the perfect adaptation of the decoration to the architecture. It is perhaps this marked characteristic of the mosaics of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia which differentiates them sharply from contemporary Roman mosaics which, divided into square compartments, do not add a mystical sense of the infinite to the classical feeling for space. This is fully achieved, however, in this small building at Ravenna, both by its uninterrupted mosaic surface and by the miraculous harmony of its blues and golds. This effect would not be destroyed if the various charming motives were taken away, such as, for example, the white note formed by the figure of an apostle, or the centre of one of those magical flowers which shine in the vaults.

In these mosaics there is no sign yet of Oriental influences. Their iconography is entirely Roman and in style they belong to the Graeco-Roman school.

The Cathedral Baptistery

THE BAPTISTERY OF the Cathedral, which is also known as the Neonian, or Baptistery of the Orthodox, is a brilliant triumph of colour.

The origin of this building and of its mosaic decoration is still a matter of discussion.

Although the early historian of Ravenna, Andrea Agnello, declares in his *Liber Pontificalis* that the Bishop Neon towards the middle of the fifth century decorated this building, others believe, from a stylistic study of the mosaics, that all the decoration belongs to a period fifty years earlier, more precisely to the time of Ursus, the bishop responsible for the building of the Cathedral. If this is so, these mosaics, and not those of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, are the oldest in Ravenna.

The Baptistery, which is octagonal in plan, is crowned with a large cupola. In course of time, as with other of the oldest buildings in Ravenna, the level of the interior has risen, and the brick surface of the exterior has also been modified.

As in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, there can also be seen in the Cathedral Baptistery a perfect harmony between the architecture and the decoration. The latter, made up of reflecting surfaces such as polychromatic marbles, iridescent mosaics, and of painted stucco, covers the whole interior, and mingles so intimately with the architecture, that its various parts seem to have lost all their functional purpose and to have become only chromatic divisions.

The colour symphony, which does not possess the delicate calm of the Placidia mosaics, but is violently explosive throughout, is based primarily on a dominant yellow and green which is broken up in places with dissonant notes of red, blue and white.

The eight columns, which stand at the base of the angles of the Baptistery, support eight arches, which carry a sort of pergola. The pergola, standing out against a dark blue background, consists of green acanthus scrolls, picked out in gold. These are equally spaced and leave room for golden medallions inset with small figures of prophets.

The band above is pierced, like a portico, with great windows, surrounded by stucco decorations, which lighten the construction and make the dome appear loftier and more airy. As the eye looks higher one sees two concentric divisions, one above the other, and at the apex a large disc which forms the centre of the whole decoration.

In the first zone, regularly divided by strange plants with thick leaves, stand a series of buildings each flanked with small porticoes. Whilst in the buildings, or rather in the empty apses, stand alternately thrones and altars, under the porticoes are curved niches containing empty seats (No. 11) or green plants surrounded by partitions. In this decoration, which contains symbols specially pertaining to the sovereignty of Christ, all the colours vibrate. From the lively yellow of the columns of the porticoes we pass to the blue of the partitions, from the gold of the buildings to the violet of the cushions, from the different modulations of green in the palms and cypresses to the various lines of blue, frequently changing into grey.

The next zone is quieter in colour, which contains the procession of the twelve Apostles, led by St Peter and St Paul, each carrying in their veiled hands a triumphal crown. Separated by narrow candelabra of leaves, they march slowly on a green ground, with a uniformity of gesture and movement which gives a sense of solemnity to their procession, and provides at the same time a clear indication of a new stylistic direction. They

are clothed in tunics of gold and silver, which the sky outlines in blue. Over their heads, depicted in touches of vivid contrasted colour, hang blue draperies with red borders, which surround the great central circle and contribute a sort of rotary movement to the centre of the composition. Here, greatly restored, appears the Baptism of Christ, with the personification of the Jordan, like an antique marine divinity, rising from the waves with a green rush in his hand.

Whilst the classical elements of this mosaic are undeniable and the faces of the Apostles, so powerfully expressed, are typically Roman, there is also evidence of a new stylistic development, which reveals a change in the artist's intention.

The Archiepiscopal Chapel

THE SMALL ARCHIEPISCOPAL CHAPEL,, also known as the Oratory of St Andrew, dates approximately fifty years later than the Baptistery of the Cathedral. It was not built (as has been stated) by St Peter Chrysologos (429–51), but by Peter II, who was Bishop from 494 to 519, that is during the period when Theodoric ruled at Ravenna. The mosaics can therefore be dated between the end of the fifth and the first two decades of the sixth century.

The oratory is preceded by a small rectangular court, with a barrel vault, covered by an ornamental mosaic which has been greatly restored. Its design, which combines various kinds of birds and flowers, cruciform in shape (No. 20), is also to be found on certain walls in Ravenna, which are decorated with small birds in a pattern of stylized foliage. The charm of the colour of this vault is largely due to the white centres of the flowers, which stand out against the gold background, and to small touches of green, blue and purple. In the lunette above the door of the court is the figure, restored in its lower part, of Christ the Warrior, who stands on the heads of a serpent and a lion, whilst he holds in his right hand a cross, and in his left an open book, on which are written the words: *Ego sum via, veritas et vita.*

The oratory itself, enclosed in an apse, is cruciform in shape. It is covered by a groined vault carried on four arches. Along the axes of the vault are four angels in white, holding between them in their raised arms a disc, containing the monogram IX, first letters of the Greek words, Jesus Christ. With the angels, the white colour of whose robes stands out boldly against the gold background, are the symbols of the Evangelists, rising from brightly-coloured clouds. On two of the four intrados of the arches are medallions containing busts of the twelve Apostles, with the bust of the youthful Christ in the centre, also in a medallion; under the other two arches are twelve saints on either side of the monograms of Christ, between A and Ω.

The faces of the four angels, heightened in places with brilliant colours, create an austere impression intensified by their eyes which look straight in front of them. The same effect is produced by the faces of the saints, who are haloed by their white silk veils,

and are adorned with precious stones, which appear on their collars and in their hair.

The simplicity and harmony of the general effect of the decoration, produced by a small range of colours, gives a special character to these mosaics. They are, however, in spite of their gold background, still conspicuously in the Roman tradition, both as to their colour and their iconography.

The Baptistery of the Arians

THE SAME DESIGN AS IN the Cathedral Baptistery is to be found in the Baptistery of the Arians, an octagonal building with four apses, which was originally surrounded by a heptagonal ambulatory. The date of its erection is unknown, but it was certainly built by Theodoric, consequently it can be placed between the years 493, the date of the entry of the Gothic king into Ravenna, and 526, the date of his death.

The artist who designed the decoration of the cupola of the Arian Baptistery was clearly influenced by the geometrical division into zones of the vault of the Neonian Baptistery. The much smaller diameter of the cupola, however, prevented him from repeating the original design in its entirety. For this reason, when he had completed the central medallion, he could only surround it by a single band, instead of by two, as in the Cathedral Baptistery. The central medallion repeats the scene of the Baptism of Christ; here, however, St John the Baptist is not on the right of Christ but on the left, and the river god of the Jordan does not emerge partly from the waters he personifies, but is seated on the right.

There is also an alteration in the series of the twelve Apostles, compared with those in the Cathedral Baptistery. Here in two processions, separated by narrow palm branches, and holding crowns of precious stones in their veiled hands, they advance in converging directions, so that St Peter and St Paul (No. 21) at the head of their processions face each other. St Peter carries a key and St Paul a book, instead of crowns. They have between them a large throne, on which is a red cushion, surmounted by a cross. The scene of the meeting of the two princes of the Apostles has to be viewed from the opposite side to that for the medallion containing the Baptism of Christ.

With these variations and with the introduction of a throne in the circle of the Apostles, the artist has sought to avoid too close an imitation of the decoration of the Neonian Baptistery, and has made a single representation of the symbol of the *etimasia* (the throne of the Last Judgment), which in the Cathedral Baptistery was repeated four times. The same intensification and simplification is to be found in the colour scheme as well as in the iconography. The Arian Baptistery does not reproduce the vivid effect with highlights and reflections, nor does it repeat the strong colouring that characterizes the Baptistery of the Orthodox. This is no doubt due to a new feeling for colour, whereby the white tones are no longer represented by the artist in a shining material, but with marble, a duller and less reflective substance.

The Apostles, with gold nimbi, are clothed in white. As they advance, so repetitive are their movements and the lines of their drapery, that a unified rhythm is produced. Even their faces are practically uniform in design, and their features almost identical. Their figures stand out singly against the gold background, which would produce a single effect of light if it were not broken up by the series of lines formed by the palm trees, and by the brilliant green of their foliage. The colours of the central medallion are more contrasted than in the rest of the mosaic, but this does not prove, as has been thought, that it is two centuries later in date than the zone containing the procession of the Twelve Apostles. A technical analysis has rather indicated an earlier date for the centre, as the *tesserae* at the edge of the outer zone are often superimposed on those of the central medallion.

The mosaics of the Arian Baptistery should therefore be considered as belonging to a single period, although the procession of the Apostles, with the exception of St Peter, St Paul, and the figure next to him, reveal a different and less accomplished hand.

S. Apollinare Nuovo

A LARGE PART OF THE mosaic decoration of the magnificent basilica of S Apollinare Nuovo also dates from the time of Theodoric. This church was built by the Gothic emperor beside his palace, and dedicated to the Redeemer. It was therefore originally destined for the Arian cult.

The walls of the central nave are almost completely covered with mosaics, which can be divided into three horizontal bands. The first fills the large surface contained between the top of the arcading, supported by two rows of columns, and the base of the windows. The second covers the areas between the windows, and the third lies between the top of the windows and the ceiling.

The topmost band is made up of a series of rectangular panels, which contain scenes from the life and passion of Christ, alternating with decorative panels, each representing a large shell, surmounted by a cross and two doves. In the panels on the left-hand wall, which, for the most part, represent the miracles of Christ, each scene contains only a small number of figures, which are often much alike. Christ always appears young and without a beard, whilst one of the Apostles who accompanies him makes a gesture of astonishment with his right hand. In the panels on the right-hand wall, on the contrary, which contain episodes from the life of Christ, each scene contains a considerable number of figures, often grouped, as in the Last Supper (No. 29), or in the Agony in the Garden (No. 32). There is more movement in the compositions and the scenes are more dramatic; Christ, who is older, is here always represented with a beard.

This difference in the iconographic representation of Christ does not, as has been supposed, prove that the date for the panels of the left-hand walls is different to that of the right-hand. In all the panels the most marked homogeneity of style can be observed,

which is stressed by the almost similar proportions of all the figures, by the gold backgrounds, and by the lively colouring. The colours are very little gradated, and consist largely of the white of the Apostles' robes, the red of that of Christ, and of a tender green of the grassy earth. These are varied by notes of blue, yellow and dark red, which heighten unexpectedly the general colouring. The colour design is particularly striking in the panel which represents Christ, accompanied by two angels, separating the flocks. The angel presenting the white sheep is clothed in a reddish dress, the other, who presents the goats with spotted hides, is completely in blue, whilst Christ in the centre of the scene is clothed in a purple dress.

From the point of view of subject matter, many of the iconographic details disclose a Roman origin. Two scenes only need be studied which are the most informative on this point: the Raising of Lazarus and the Denial of St Peter. One seems to see, transferred to mosaic, one of the innumerable paintings of the Catacombs representing this miracle of Christ, or one of the many sculptures from early Christian sarcophagi of the fourth century, depicting the humiliating episode in the life of the Prince of the Apostles. This adherence to Roman models is all the more interesting as it proves that Theodoric did not import artists from the East to decorate the buildings which he had erected in Ravenna.

In the spaces between the windows appear, against a gold background, solemn figures clothed in white. They hold rolls or books in their hands. These probably represent prophets rather than saints. Though they are distinguished from each other by a certain variety of attitude, they produce on the whole a uniform impression. However, it should be noted that, with a simplicity of design, which distinguishes these thirty-two figures, all are shown full face, and in the modelling of their white draperies one can recognize the hand of artists who, working in the Roman style, are still fascinated by form and volume.

The mosaics, which ornament the band underneath the prophets, do not all date from the time of Theodoric. Only the extremities belong to this period. At the beginning of each wall is represented, on one side, Theodoric's palace with the city of Ravenna behind, and on the other, the port of Classis (No. 22) with its cluster of buildings. At the other ends we see the Saviour on his throne, surrounded by four angels, on one side, and the Virgin and Child, also surrounded by four angels, on the other. We now have between the columns of Theodoric's palace (the *Palatium*) white hangings with coloured ornaments. These, however, are not original, but are the result of a restoration made in the reign of Justinian, when the Arian church, soon after the middle of the sixth century, passed to the Catholic cult. The figures were therefore removed as they were no longer considered suitable for commemoration. They were probably members of Theodoric's court and perhaps the king himself. Of some of these figures the hands alone remain in the centre of one or two of the columns, and circular contours around the places where

their heads used to be are still visible. A similar purification took place at the same time of the figures which originally appeared on the walls of Classis. The line of these figures can be traced today by the difference in the materials employed in the alterations, which had to retain the original alignment of the stones in the walls. Above the battlemented wall, strengthened by towers, certain buildings can be seen, whilst on the left is depicted the harbour, in whose sea-green waters are three ships, one of which has hoisted its white sails.

The groups which represent Christ and the Virgin on their thrones between the angels, partly restored, clearly manifest a tendency towards symmetrical construction. The Redeemer, the Virgin with the Child on her knees, all the angels, are static figures, all on the same plane, all seen full face. Impassive, rigid, they look straight in front of them, with their eyes directed to a far distant point. Below, on the emerald green grass, are flowers of Paradise, with white and purple centres. The composition is so solemn and hieratic, the spirit which inspires the scenes is so transcendental, that it is thought that the two groups are the work of a school which belongs more strictly to Ravenna, and was more disposed to welcome Oriental influences instead of those of the Roman school.

When, towards the middle of the sixth century, the archbishop Agnellus obtained the authorization from Justinian to 'reconcile' the Arian church to the Catholic cult, he dedicated it to St Martin, the saint who was regarded as the hammer of the pagans (*malleus paganorum*). He then proceeded to destroy not only the personages of the court of King Theodoric, represented in the mosaics, but also the *damnatio memoriae* of the figures which originally filled the spaces between the city of Ravenna and the Redeemer, and between the port of Classis and the Virgin. He substituted for them (according to the historian of Ravenna, Andrea Agnello) the white-robed procession of martyrs, and the resplendent succession of virgins, who are preceded by the three Kings, bearing gifts. But here, we find a new style, the Byzantine, which had been adopted in Ravenna some years before (as we shall see later), when the apse of the church of S. Vitale was decorated. The martyrs are twenty-five in number, preceded by St Martin, who alone is robed in a mantle of amethyst. They advance on a field sprinkled with white and red flowers, carrying crowns ornamented with precious stones. Clothed in white robes, old and young alike, they proceed slowly, in the same plane, towards the Redeemer, with the same equal cadence, with the same hieratic gesture, which recalls the slow rhythm of the psalms. A similar uniformity is to be found in the palms, which are regularly repeated between the martyrs, underlining the rhythmical repetition of the figures, on which is based the whole effect of the composition. The artist has also similarly stylized all the faces and the clothing of the martyrs, he has depicted the former with the same gentle gradations of colour, and has furrowed the latter with the same severe folds, which makes them equally rigid.

This procession of saints is balanced on the other wall by the procession of virgins, who are preceded by the three Kings. These last, although the upper parts of their bodies

are completely restored, enable us to realize the richness of colour which enlivened their Oriental robes. With their heads slightly inclined, the virgins advance in slow procession, on a ground sprinkled with lilies and roses. They carry in their hands crowns symbolizing martyrdom (No. 23). As with the martyrs, they also present a uniformity of attitude, but their dresses differ from those of the martyrs by their richness. From their high coiffure hang long white veils, with blue fringes, which surround their fine robes brocaded in gold, decorated with stars, circles, segments, in red, green, yellow and brown. On this dazzling magnificence shine innumerable pearls, with which their hair, collars and belts are covered. Large contemplative eyes stand out from their oval faces, and on their narrow lips flickers a slight smile. Between these figures appear palm trees, with simple foliage. The gold background, much paler than that used by the artists of Theodoric, radiates around these women like a gentle caress with its iridescent colouring. So in this wonderful procession, all is light, rhythm and colour.

S. Vitale

THE CHURCH OF S. VITALE is also an example in its mosaics of the combination of two artistic influences, though here they are approximately contemporary.

Begun by Bishop Ecclesius (521-34), the church was continued by Bishop Victor, and finally completed by Archbishop Maximian, who consecrated it in 547. The design is concentric, and it consists of an octagon surrounded by a circular loggia. The spaces radiating from the centre, the alternating play of light and shadow produced by the masses, and by the spaces between, create a highly pictorial effect, which is heightened by the mosaic decoration in the choir and in the apse. Here we find a whole symphony of colours, whereby the architectural features are made to fit into the general colour pattern, so that the columns, in veined marble or in alabaster, do not produce the usual pale tone of marble, whilst the capitals, carved and deeply undercut, present traces of polychromatic work, similar to the stucco under the arches.

The great arch, which divides the body of the church from the choir, is decorated on its intrados by fifteen shields, containing the busts of the Redeemer, the twelve Apostles, and St Gervase and St Protase, said to be the sons of St Vitale. They are all full-face, and their faces, in their characteristically strong modelling, would be reminiscent of the Apostles' heads in the Cathedral Baptistery, were it not for the pale light in which they are seen.

Golden yellow and green are the dominant colours in the choir vault, and the colour scheme is a development and amplification of that of the Archiepiscopal Chapel. We have here four angels as caryatides, but so strong is the upward rhythm that they are almost detached from the blue globes on which they stand. They lift their arms to hold up a garland of flowers and fruit, in the middle of which the Mystic Lamb, against a blue background with stars, stands out white. Between the ribs of the vault, decorated with

fruits and green leaves, are innumerable acanthus scrolls, in which are interspersed, in various colours, fruits, stars, little roses, animals, birds and even a fish.

The decoration of the walls of the choir is similar in conception, and is almost identical. From each side vine branches, laden with bunches of white and red grapes, uncoil rhythmically across the triforium, whilst at the sides are the four Evangelists. They are all aged, all dressed in white, and each has his respective symbol above him. In a rocky and picturesque landscape, at the bottom of which, around mirrors of clear water, are various kinds of animals, the Evangelists look upwards waiting for the inspiration to write their sacred Gospels. For this reason beside each figure stands a table with the necessary implements for writing, making little still-lifes which contrast with the surrounding landscape, enlivened with trees, plants and animals (No. 44).

Under the triforium are two great decorated lunettes. The left-hand represents two episodes in the life of Abraham: the hospitality offered to the three angels who announced to him and his wife Sarah the birth of a child, and the sacrifice of his son which Abraham, at the divine command, was about to accomplish, if the hand of the Almighty, appearing from the clouds, had not stayed his arm. Over the lunette are two flying angels, holding a disc containing a cross. On the left of this group is the prophet Jeremiah, with a great open scroll in his hands, and on the right Moses on Sinai receives the Law, whilst lower down are the chiefs of the twelve tribes of Israel, around Aaron.

The lunette on the right unites in one scene the sacrifices of Abel and of Melchisedec. In the centre stands an altar; from one side approaches Abel, holding a lamb, and represented as a shepherd, clothed in wretched skins, whilst from the other side the priest-king Melchisedec advances with his offering, wearing solemn pontifical robes. They both look towards the sky as they make their offering, where a hand, symbol of God, appears in the midst of the clouds. Over the centre of the lunette are two angels, as on the other wall, holding another disc and cross. On the right of these is depicted the prophet Isaias, and on the left Moses a second time, who appears twice, once feeding the flock of Jethro, and again on Mount Horeb loosening his sandals at the Lord's command.

The arch which separates the choir from the apse is entirely decorated. Although the surface is extremely narrow, the artist has found subjects admirably suited for his needs. In the centre he has placed two angels, almost horizontal, who with their outstretched arms hold a shield, whilst at the sides there are symbolical representations of the two cities, Jerusalem and Bethlehem. In all the scenes in the choir one observes a profound sense of reality, even if the colours, now and again, so as to fit into the general scheme, depart from nature.

White is prominent in the colour scheme. Not only is it the colour of the dresses of nearly all the figures, but it is also used to mark, by means of spots or bands, the different planes of the rocks, the sides of the mountains, and the outline of the trees. But other colours also play their part, though they are low in tone, thus the greens, turning to opaque yellow, represent the fields, the blues, now pale and now deep, depict the trans-

parency of water and of sky, whilst the reds, violets, greys, blue-greens, rose-tints are combined in varying arrangements to represent the shapes of the different clouds. Stylistically, this decoration, where colour and design are evenly balanced, belongs to a local mosaic tradition, which has its roots in a naturalism, which is never entirely lost, even when there is distortion.

In the mosaics of the apse, however, we see a different tendency. Here the figures, almost drowned in the gold which surrounds them, appear solemn and sacred. Here we have, for the first time in Ravenna, the Byzantine style, which not only shows itself by a new language in colour and design, but also in the choice of subject, which belongs to a courtly world, sumptuous and hieratic.

On the apse appears a Theophany. The ground is sprinkled with flowers, and regularly divided by two rows of rocks, from which at the centre flow the four mystical rivers of Paradise. The Redeemer appears in majesty, sitting on a globe of intense blue. Youthful, and without beard, he wears a purple robe. His head is surrounded by a nimbus, on which is inscribed a cross. He has an archangel on each side, as bodyguard. With his outstretched right hand he offers the martyr's crown of precious stones to St Vitale, who receives it with his hands veiled in a rich chlamys. On the other side approaches the Bishop Ecclesius, in tunic and pallium, holding a model of the church which he had founded. These figures, which are all of the same height, are so harmonized, that a perfectly balanced composition is achieved. Plastic feeling, however, is now only a memory. The figures have become transformed into pure rhythm, and are manifestations of a spiritual world, which impression is enhanced by the shining gold background.

At the same time, it is worth noting that certain effects in colour and in design (such as the realism of the face of Ecclesius, the heavenly garden sprinkled with flowers, the small blue and red clouds, which soften the surface of the gold background) link this composition with earlier mosaics in Ravenna. For this reason, we cannot exclude the suggestion that this mosaic should be attributed to a Ravenna workshop, working in a new manner under Byzantine influences.

On the other hand the two great panels which face each other lower down in the apse are entirely Byzantine. Above, the heavenly court has been represented, below we have the earthly court with all its show, pomp and magnificence. On one side we see the Emperor Justinian (No. 42), preceded by the Archbishop Maximian, and by two ecclesiastics, advancing slowly, holding a golden paten; he is followed by civil dignitaries and by his guards. On the other side, there is the Empress Theodora, followed by a group of ladies of her court, leaving her palace. She carries a large gold chalice. She is preceded by two officials, one of whom pushes aside the curtains to open the way (No. 40).

There is a slow rhythmical movement in the two processions, emphasized by the horizontal position of the fore-arms. The clothing of all the figures is rich and magnificent, but stiff and without depth. One does not feel a body beneath them. We have almost the impression that these people live in an unreal world, beyond time and space, though the

characterization of certain faces, as for example that of Maximian, reaches a great expressive power (No. 55).

Freed from all sense of volume and relief, the eye is wholly taken up by the colour, which the artist has employed in large areas to make the effect stronger. In the panel of Justinian, he has used a great deal of white and purple, there are also strong colours such as red and green which dominate in the figures of the soldiers. We find white and purple again in the Theodora panel. Here, however, there are other colours, quite unrealistically employed, which enrich by their brilliance the general effect. From alternating red, blue and white in the tentage over the heads of the ladies in white, we pass to the various colours of the dresses which they wear; these, covered with different ornaments, present a great variety of pattern and materials. The iridescent shell which appears behind the head of the Empress and the brilliant spots made by the pearls which surround her head, are finally combined in a magical harmony, so that all the figures, stripped of corporeal reality, become almost abstract designs.

S. Apollinare in Classe

AFTER THE GLOWING RED of the mosaics of S Vitale, we find a marked contrast in the decoration of S Apollinare in Classe, the magnificent, vast and solemn basilica begun by Bishop Ursus (535-8) and consecrated in 549 by Archbishop Maximian. The design is reduced to a few colours, and symbolism plays a large part, not only in the apse, but also in the arch above the apse. The decoration does not all belong to one epoch. Dating from the middle of the sixth century are the mosaics of the apse, the four bishops represented in the spaces between the windows, the two Archangels Michael and Gabriel, who stand at the base on each side of the apsidal arch. The two panels which, one descriptive and the other symbolical, are below the apse are attributed to the end of the seventh century. These were, however, restored later. The mosaics at the top of the apsidal arch date from the seventh century or, according to some authorities, from the ninth century, whilst the two busts of St Matthew and St Luke at each foot of the arch are eleventh or twelfth century.

The great vault of the apse, decorated in a few harmonious, but vivid, colours, displays a complex symbolical design. At the top, the hand of God against the background of a golden sky, appears from very narrow reddish clouds, from which also emerge the half figures of Moses and Elias. They are on either side of the large central disc, decorated with precious stones, which encloses a great Latin cross in the middle of countless stars. Below, in the centre of a green field, are three sheep, two on the right and one on the left, with their heads turned towards the celestial disc. We can recognize in the composition a clear reference to the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor, as is indicated by the presence of Moses and Elias, and of the three sheep, symbols of the three Apostles who, according to the Gospel, were present: Peter, James and John.

In the lower part of the composition stretches a large extent of green ground, on

which are brown and greenish rocks (No. 58). These rocks, outlined in blue and in white, lie between flowers, grasses, plants and various kinds of trees, amongst which can be distinguished the pine, the tree which even today is still a characteristic of the landscape around Classe. At the centre of this green plain is the large dominating figure of St Apollinarius, who stands with his arms outstretched, in the attitude of an *orante*. Towards him approach, six a side, twelve white sheep, a symbolical representation of the faithful entrusted to the charge of the holy pastor.

In the spaces between the windows, within a kind of small building, are represented, almost alike, the Bishops Ursicinus, Ursus, Severus and Ecclesius, dressed in sacred robes, and holding books in their left hands. Their bodies are flat, but their faces are expressive, and are characterised by the way in which the *tesserae* are laid which are not placed arbitrarily but follow the muscles of the face.

Belonging to the time of Archbishop Reparatus (671-7) is the descriptive panel on the left wall of the apse, which is a figure composition, reminiscent of the Justinian panel in S Vitale. Here is depicted the handing over of privileges to the Church of Ravenna by the Emperor of the East, Constantine IV Pogonatus, and his brothers, Heraclius and Tiberius. The Archbishops Maurus and Reparatus are also depicted, who were powerful protagonists of the independence of the Ravenna Church. This panel has, however, been greatly restored, especially the heads, so that they are not representative of seventh-century art; in the rest the modelling is very weak and the artist has sought to supplement it by the sumptuousness of the robes. The panel opposite, which is symbolical, represents the sacrifices of Abel, Melchisedec and Abraham, also derived from figures in the mosaics of S Vitale, who are here united in one composition, and not unsuccessfully balanced.

In the centre of the triumphal arch, assigned by some to the seventh century, and by others to the ninth, is a medallion containing a bust of Christ in the act of benediction, emerging in the midst of the symbols of the Evangelists, from a sky of red clouds, conventionally elongated. In the band below twelve sheep climb towards Christ, symbolizing the Apostles, who emerge from the symbolical cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The colours here are quite flat, and the figures only stand out through their outlines. Below, on each side, at the spring of the arch, are two golden palms on a deep blue background. Lower still appear in military costume the almost identical figures of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel (mid sixth century), whilst at the bottom are two small panels, in quieter colouring, containing the busts of the Evangelists, Matthew and Luke, which through the poverty of the design are attributed to after the year 1000.

If the mosaic decoration of the apse of S Vitale is compared to that of S Apollinare in Classe, it is clearly apparent that the latter does not retain any of the typical characteristics of Byzantine art, in spite of an undeniable tendency towards stylization. Through the vigorous composition of the whole decoration, and through the simplicity of its colouring, it manifestly belongs to the School of Ravenna.

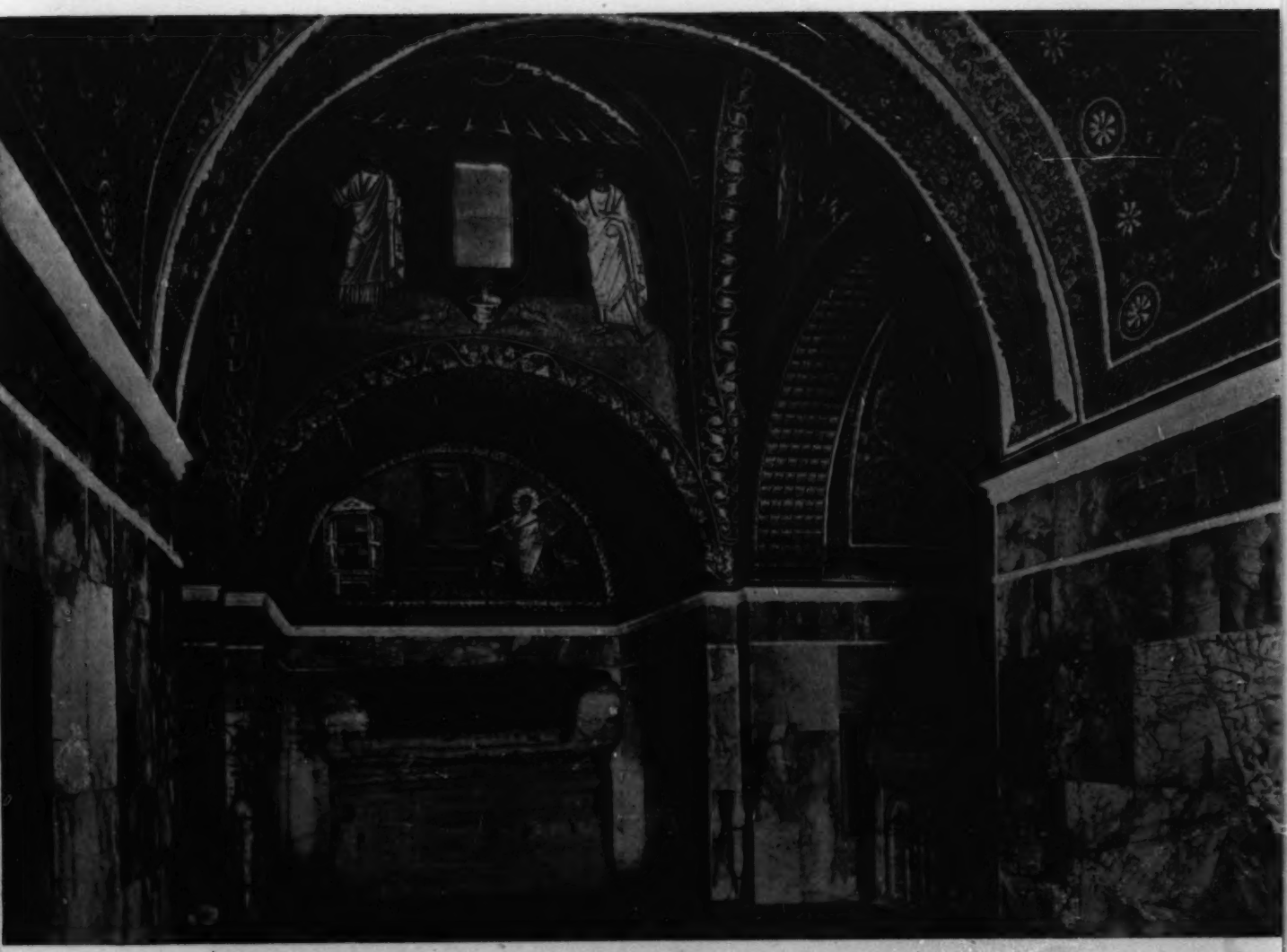


PLATE I. MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA: *The Interior*

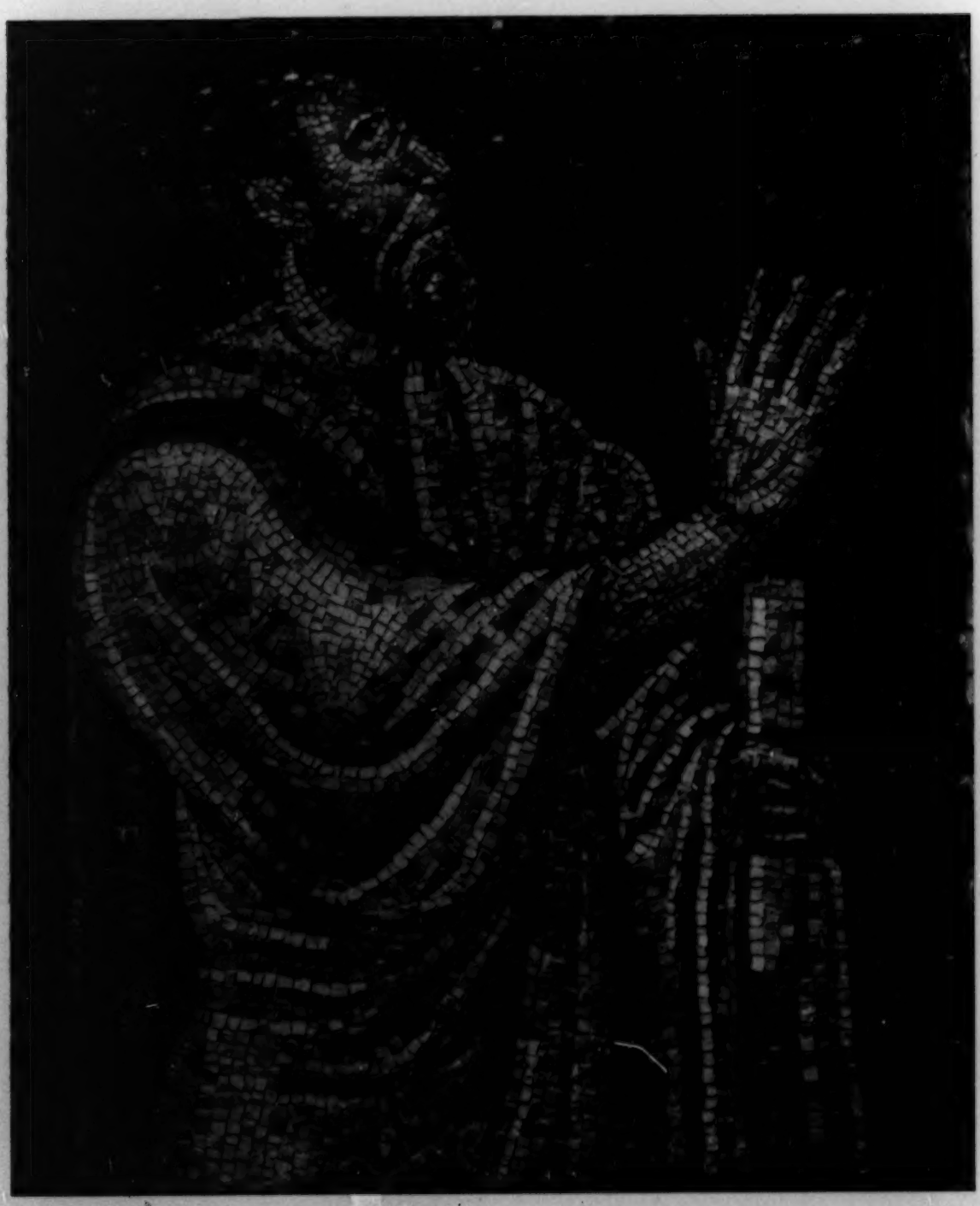
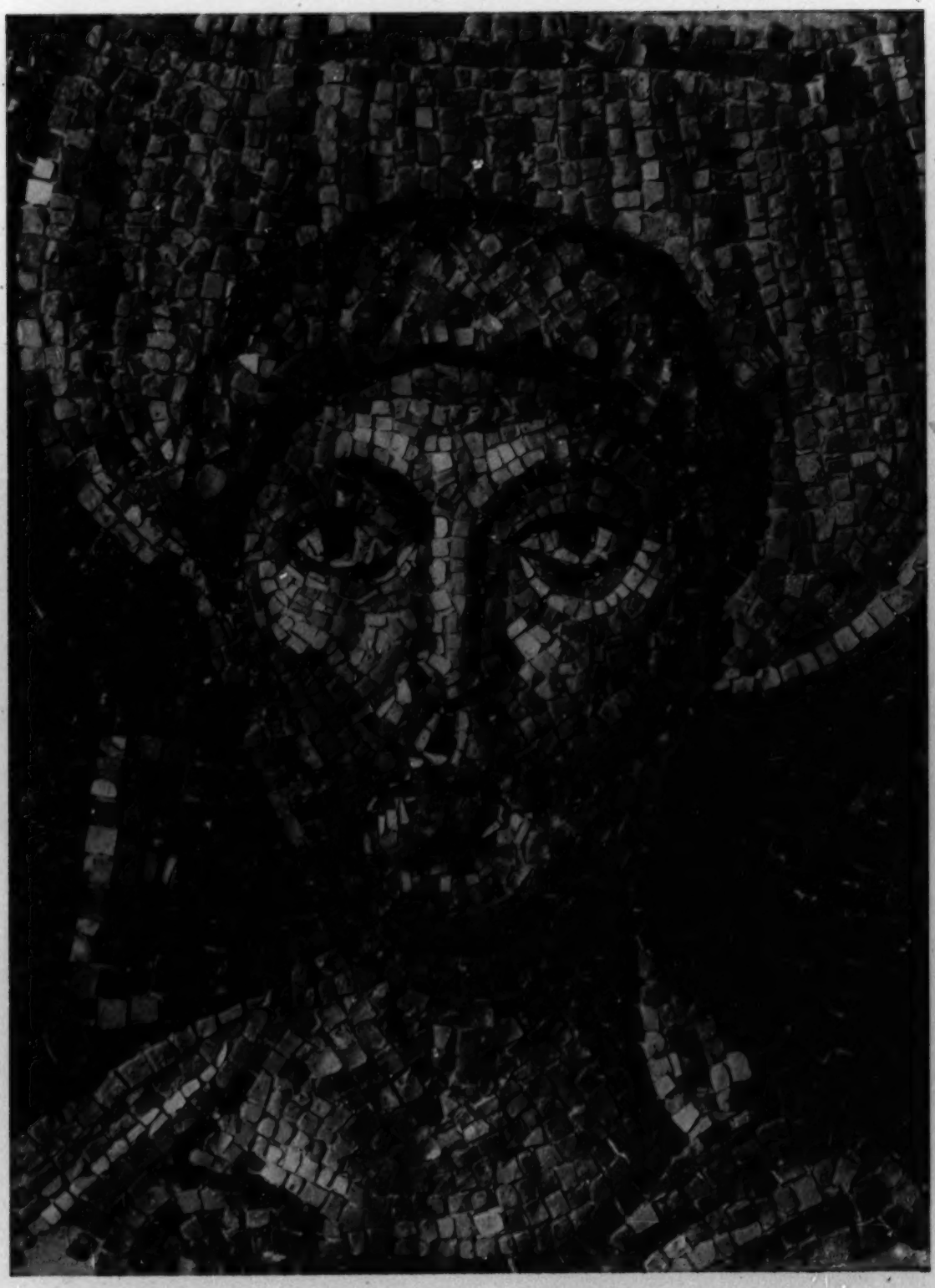


PLATE II. MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA: *The Apostle Paul* (*No.* 2)

PLATE III. CATHEDRAL-BAPTISTERY: *Head of St Andrew* (*No.*14)



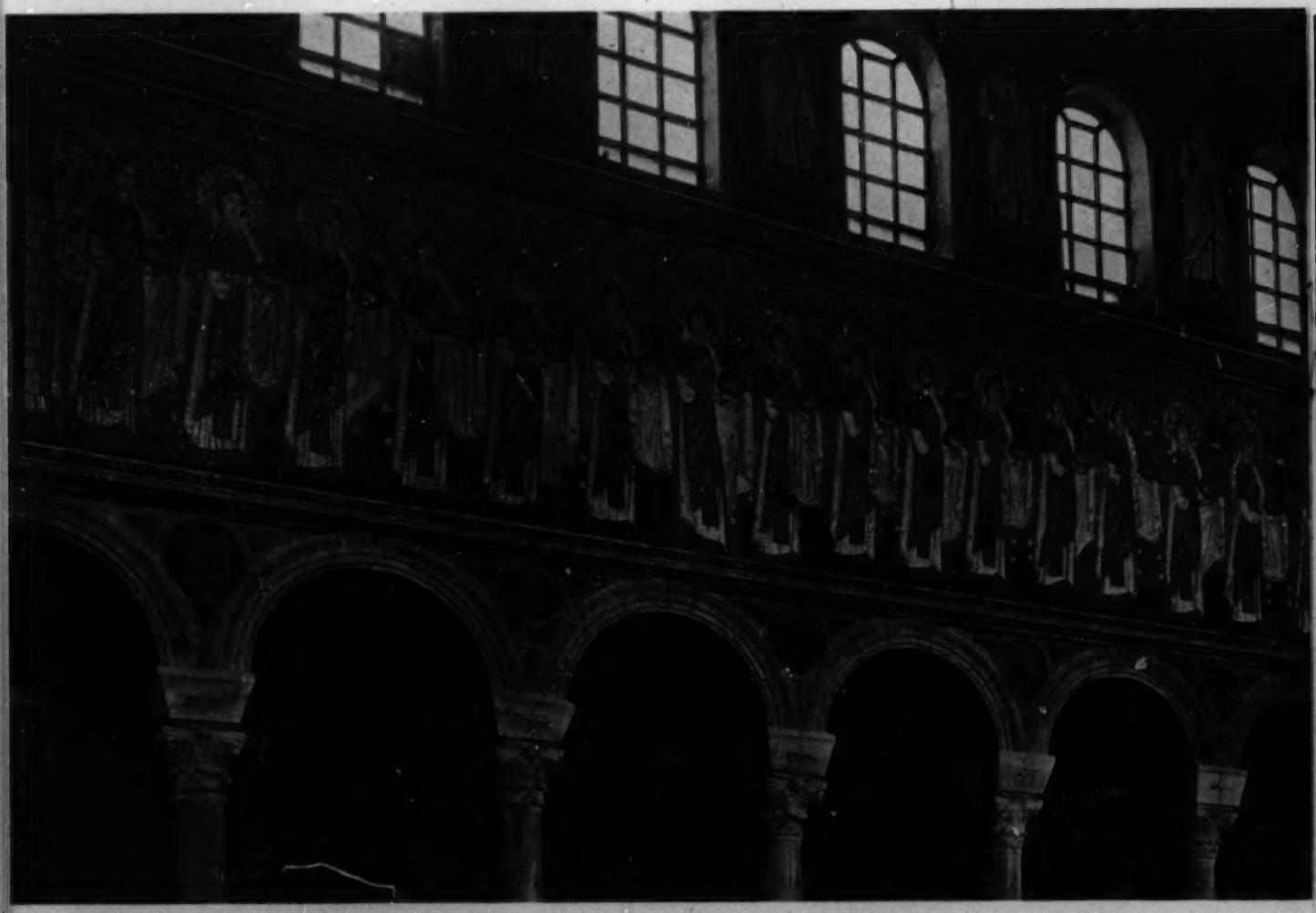


PLATE IV. S. APOLLINARE NUOVO: *The Interior*

PLATE V. MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA: *The Good Shepherd* (*No.* 1)

PLATE VI
S. APOLLINARE NUOVO:
St Agnes (*No.* 23)
(One of the figures shown in Plate IV)

PLATE VII
S. VITALE:
Detail from the Empress Theodora and her suite
(*No.* 40)

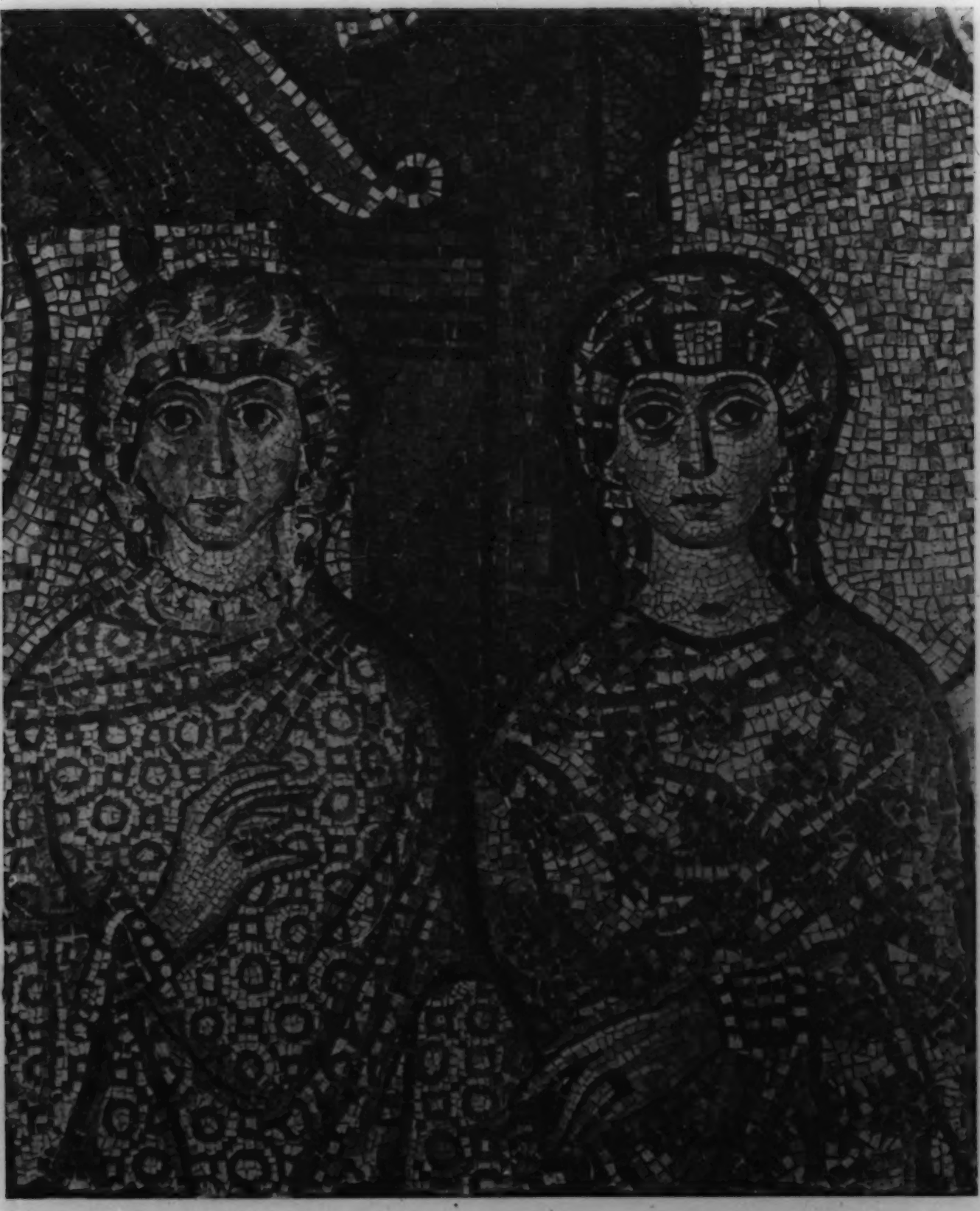


PLATE VIII. S. VITALE: *The Interior*

PLATE IX. S. APOLLINARE IN CLASSE: *The Apse*

PLATE X. S. VITALE: *Symbol of St Mark* (No. 45)

PLATE XI. S. VITALE: *A heron and a tortoise* (*No.* 50)

PLATE XII. S. APOLLINARE IN CLASSE: *Symbol of St Luke* (*No.* 57)

General Characteristics of the Mosaics at Ravenna

WITH THE DECORATION OF S. Apollinare in Classe ends the series of mosaics which Ravenna still preserves. They belong to the schools of Rome, Ravenna and Byzantium. Their contemplation produces different psychological reactions, but they are primarily mosaics wherein colours live and palpitate. These mosaics, unlike frescoes, mirror and reflect all the light which falls upon them. We might almost say that the light is multiplied, as it is automatically broken up into as many, almost infinite, units of colour as there are *tesserae* which form the mosaic surface. If we remember that these *tesserae* are enamel, glass, marble and mother of pearl, and have consequently a very high reflective power, we can readily understand why the unknown poet of the time of King Theodoric, struck by the triumphant splendour of the light which was reflected from these mosaics, could make this startling exclamation: *Aut lux hic nata est, aut capta hic libera regnat*; 'Either light is born here, or imprisoned, here it reigns free.'

But in the mosaics of Ravenna, as well as light, colour is also important. The surfaces sparkle with gold and silver, they shine with vinous reds, they are shrill with emerald greens, and soothing with their milky whites. This symphony of colours is so marvellous that Dante, who composed at Ravenna a great deal of the third part of his *Divine Comedy*, was perhaps inspired by them when he wrote his magnificent verses:

E vidi lume in forma di rivera
Fulvido di fulgore, intra due rive
Dipinte di mirabil primavera.

Di tal fiumana uscian faville vive,
E d'ogni parte si mettean ne' fiori
Quasi rubin che oro circunscrive.*

But, besides light and colour, another element characterizes these mosaics, especially the later ones; it is rhythm. The figures, who appear rather as apparitions than human beings, obey a law, like psalmody, which tends to make them uniform and alike, not only in their general appearance but also in their gestures, the folds of their garments and in their faces.

These qualities then, light, colour and rhythm, indivisibly united, produce another typical characteristic, the power to transform space by dematerializing the architecture, and, through a succession of large coloured surfaces, producing a kind of atmospheric halo, which changes with every variation of light.

* And I saw a light, in river form, glow tawny betwixt banks painted with marvellous spring. From out this river issued living sparks, and dropped on every side into the blossoms, like rubies set in gold.—PARADISO XXX, 61-6 (trans. P. H. Wicksteed, The Temple Classics, Dent).

Catalogue

MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA

1 *Detail from the lunette of the Good Shepherd*

6′ 4¾″×4′ (1·95×1·23 *m.*)

The kindly figure of the mystical Shepherd, so dear to the painters of the Catacombs, appears here much more freely interpreted in his symbolism. In fact, the Good Shepherd of the paintings to be found in the cemeteries is replaced by Christ, the *pedum* (the shepherd's crook) by a lofty cross, and the *exomis* (short tunic) by a rich golden robe, with brown stripes, over which is worn a purple mantle; also a large gold nimbus shines around the head. Seated on a rock facing towards his right, the Good Shepherd turns his body slowly to the front in a noble gesture. He leans with his left hand on the golden cross, and with his right he strokes one of the sheep, which stands beside him. He is in the middle of a rocky landscape, softened by grass and shrubs. His young and beardless face discloses a charming gentleness; it is enlivened by the red *tesserae* which are scattered here and there, the artist counter-acting their effect by means of bluish shadows and by surrounding the face with violet hair, the curls of which reach the shoulders. The background is a fine blue which is slightly gradated towards the horizon. The figure of the young Shepherd is thus also surrounded by a pale, transparent halo, which seems to bathe the whole landscape in a morning light.

Slightly before the middle of the fifth century. PLATE V

2 *The Apostle Paul*

3′ 1¾″×2′ 9½″ (0·96×0·85 *m.*)

The Apostle of the Gentiles, one of the figures decorating the great lunettes which support the cupola, is recognizable by his characteristic features, a bald head, and a beard cut almost to a point. He holds in his left hand a *volumen* and he lifts his right hand towards the symbol of redemption which decorates the top of the cupola. The artist seems to have been inspired by sculpture drapery in designing the folds of his dress.

Slightly before the middle of the fifth century. PLATE II

3 *The Apostle Peter*

5′ 11¼″×3′ 10″ (1·81×1·17 *m.*)

Also represented in one of the four lunettes which support the cupola. As well as the characteristic traits, beard and long hair, the Prince of the Apostles is recognizable by the traditional symbol, which he holds in his left hand, a key. His face, enlivened by some touches of red on the nose and left ear, looks in the direction towards which he raises his right arm, to the gold cross which shines in the centre of the cupola amidst a myriad stars. The folds of the tunic are represented by means of grey-blue *tesserae* whilst the folds of the pallium are obtained with grey-brown *tesserae* differently gradated. The letter visible on the end of the pallium, which falls from the right arm of the Apostle, is one of those signs which, with slight differences, often ornament the dresses of the figures represented in early Christian paintings and mosaics, their significance is still unknown. This figure stands out against an intense blue background which changes to green at the base.

Slightly before the middle of the fifth century.

4 *Figure of an Apostle*

2′ 11¾″×3′ 7½″ (0·91×1·11 *m.*)

On one of the lunettes of the cupola. We cannot identify this Apostle, of youthful appearance, because, in spite of differences in their features, the Apostles, with the exception of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, were not distinguished by iconography until much later. Some have thought that the white figures represent prophets; this is disproved by the presence of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. The white garments of the Apostle stand out so clearly against the deep indigo background, that, through the colour contrast, the figure leaps to the surface in so unexpected a fashion, that we seem to see a ghost. It should be noted that the prominent features such as the eyes, the nose and the mouth, are drawn in very pronounced colours, whilst the modelling of the different planes of the face are depicted in more neutral tones.

Slightly before the middle of the fifth century.

5 *Festoon of Leaves and Fruit*

9′ 7¾″×2′ 1¼″ (2·94×0·64 *m.*)

Decorates the intrados of one of the arches supporting the cupola. The festoon against a white background rises from a cylindrical basket, made of golden rushes. In the middle of the leaves, some green, others blue, are yellow fruits with white highlights; in the upper part of the festoon, red touches are more frequently used.

Slightly before the middle of the fifth century.

6 *Doves beside a Fountain*

2′ 9″×4′ 0¾″ (0·84×1·24 *m.*)

This motive, with that represented in No. 7, is depicted between the Apostles on the north and south lunettes under the cupola. Here the two doves are not perched on the edge of the fountain, from which water springs, but stand symmetrically on either side on the green grass. This little scene, so charmingly decorative, has probably the same symbolical significance as that more clearly expressed by No. 8: the aspiration of souls towards the rewards of celestial life. The vine branches in the lower part of the mosaic are golden, the bunches of grapes rendered in golds and reds.

Slightly before the middle of the fifth century.

7 *Doves beside a Fountain*

2′ 9″×4′ 0¾″ (0·84×1·24 *m.*)

The motive is similar to that in No. 6, but here the doves, instead of being entirely against a green background, are seen partly against green and partly against blue.

Slightly before the middle of the fifth century.

8 *Doves drinking from a Vase*

2′ 4⅜″×3′ 4½″ (0·72×1·03 *m.*)

On the rim of a little vase placed on a grassy meadow are two white doves, one of which is about to drink whilst the other turns around. This motive has no doubt a classical origin. It is placed between the two Apostles on the east and west lunettes. It may be entirely decorative but it has possibly also a Christian significance. We know that doves represent the souls of the just, and that the water which they seek is the symbol for the solace of eternal life; *fons aquae salientis in vitam aeternam* (John, iv, 14).

Slightly before the middle of the fifth century.

9 *Decorative detail of the Barrel Vault*

3′ 8½″×3′ 1″ (1·12×0·94 *m.*)

The decoration on the vault of the entrance arm of this cruciform chapel gives the impression of a soft

Oriental carpet. On the indigo background stand out brilliantly white stars, crosses, roses with red centres, and corollae of white petals, surrounded by blue and gold circles. The *tesserae* do not join entirely and traces of cement can be seen between them. This thin white line creates the optical illusion that the vault appears higher than it really is.
Slightly before the middle of the fifth century.

10 *Decorative Detail on Intrados of the Western Arch*
3′ 4½″ × 2′ 2¾″ (1·03 × 0·68 *m.*)

This motive consists of a kind of trellis of green lightened with white and edged with gold. The green verges to blue and yellow whilst the divisions are marked by rows of blue *tesserae*.
Slightly before the middle of the fifth century.

CATHEDRAL BAPTISTERY

11 *Detail from the Frieze of Architectural Motives (A Small Throne)*
6′ 9½″ × 4′ 9⅞″ (2·07 × 1·47 *m.*)

Under a kind of portico, the ceiling of which is coffered, is an empty throne over which is a curved niche in light and very varied colours. The background is green at the top and grey-blue below. Against these colours stand out strongly the sulphur yellows of the columns, which vary from gold to brown. According to one interpretation this throne, which is repeated several times in the decorative frieze, is probably a bishop's throne, or a deacon's chair.
Slightly after the middle of the fifth century.

12 *Detail from the Frieze of Architectural Motives (A Garden)*
6′ 9½″ × 4′ 9⅞″ (2·07 × 1·47 *m.*)

The colours of this detail are striking. From the varied yellows of the columns, which stand out very sharply in the colour scheme, we pass to the bright green of the plants, which are entwined with touches of blue, green and red. These are lost at the bottom in the subdued blue of the balconies which become almost violet. This garden is probably a representation of the Earthly Paradise.
Slightly after the middle of the fifth century.

13 *Head of the Apostle Peter*
2′ 1½″ × 1′ 10¾″ (0·65 × 0·58 *m.*)

The head of the Prince of the Apostles, bearded and white-haired, stands out against one of the loops of the hanging, which surrounds the central medallion. Note the red which enlivens the colour of the face.
Slightly after the middle of the fifth century.

14 *Head of the Apostle Andrew*
2′ 0½″ × 1′ 9⅝″ (0·62 × 0·55 *m.*)

This head stands out against a blue veil, bordered with red and heightened with gold, which acts as a nimbus, and which is part of the drapery around the central medallion, containing the Baptism of Christ. There is a certain realism about the head of the Apostle which suggest this is a portrait from nature. Note how a narrow range of tones in lively colours, and the skilful touches of yellow cadmium, animate the prominent features of this highly expressive face.
Slightly after the middle of the fifth century.

PLATE III

15 *Head of the Apostle James*

2′ 1½″ × 1′ 9½″ (0·64 × 0·54 *m.*)

The structure of this head is expressed in a strangely modern manner, and there is an unusual look in the eyes, fixed on a far distant point.

Slightly after the middle of the fifth century.

16 *Head of the Apostle Bartholomew*

1′ 9½″ × 1′ 9⅝″ (0·54 × 0·55 *m.*)

This head with its bull-like neck, stands out prominently against the blue-green of the veil, which acts as a background. It is enlivened with touches of cadmium yellow and a dark colour boldly juxtaposed. The coarse features and the hot colouring make this face reminiscent of those of the athletes and gladiators, represented on the mosaic pavement from the Baths of Caracalla, now in the Lateran Museum.

Slightly after the middle of the fifth century.

17 *Head of the Apostle Paul*

2′ 1½″ × 1′ 9⅝″ (0·65 × 0·55 *m.*)

The Apostle of the Gentiles is distinguished by his characteristic features, such as the slightly bald head, the beard trimmed to a point, and the long face. His look has a remarkable intensity.

Slightly after the middle of the fifth century.

18 *Cock on a Branch*

1′ 4½″ × 1′ 7½″ (0·42 × 0·49 *m.*)

This detail is on one of the piers of the arches beneath the architectural frieze. The cock, in emerald green heightened with golden reflections in the wings, and with orange-red touches in the feathers, stands out against a blue background. The branches are green, but heightened with gold and yellow.

Slightly after the middle of the fifth century.

19 *Partridge on a Branch*

1′ 4½″ × 1′ 5″ (0·42 × 0·43 *m.*)

On one of the piers as No. 18.

The partridge (against a blue background) is reddish-brown in colour, which is obtained by using gilded *tesserae* in reverse. There are touches of orange-red on the beak and on the claws. The branches are golden and pale green.

Slightly after the middle of the fifth century.

THE ARCHIEPISCOPAL CHAPEL AND THE ORATORY OF ST ANDREW

20 *Detail from the Decoration of the Vault of the Forecourt*

2′ 0¾″ × 3′ 6½″ (0·63 × 1·08 *m.*)

This is a charming decorative detail, made up of a combination of lilies and small roses, which make a series of lozenges, in the middle of each of which there is a bird with variegated feathers. As a design it is reminiscent of the marble balconies to be found in Ravenna, which contain characteristically interlaced and stylized flowers, in the middle of which are small birds. The striking colour effect is achieved by the

brilliance of the white corollae against the gold background, rather than by the dark contours of the flowers and the birds.
End of the fifth or beginning of the sixth century.

THE BAPTISTERY OF THE ARIANS

21 *Bust of the Apostle Paul*
2′ 2⅜″ × 1′ (0·67 × 0·56 *m.*)
This haloed head is strangely pensive and has the traditional features of the Apostle. The great halo is outlined by blue *tesserae* and has a sky-blue band which turns greenish-grey towards the head. The contours of the features are drawn in dark purple *tesserae* and the brown flesh colour is heightened by touches of orange-red. The robes are white, which becomes in places pale blue.
End of the fifth or beginning of the sixth century.

S. APOLLINARE NUOVO

22 *The Port of Classis*
7′ 3¾″ × 5′ 0⅝″ (2·23 × 1·54 *m.*)
Three ships, one with its sails set, ride in the green-blue waters between two towers. This is a view of the port of Classis, founded by Augustus, to guard the *Mare Superum* and the Eastern Mediterranean. This scene is from the end of the left-hand wall of the nave, where Theodoric represented the *Civitas Classis*.
First decades of the sixth century.

23 *St Agnes*
9′ 1″ × 3′ 10″ (2·78 × 1·17 *m.*)
She is part of the procession of virgins, who advance slowly towards the Virgin and Child, carrying crowns of precious stones, symbols of martyrdom. The pale green of the meadow, in which are flowers and small plants, blends into the gold of the background behind the figure of the saint. She alone has an attribute, a small lamb. With her head slightly bent, the virgin emphasizes the slow processional rhythm, and her arms are stretched out carrying her crown. The robes are richly woven in gold and sprinkled with precious stones. For his whites, the Byzantine artist has used marble instead of enamel; the opaque colour of the marble makes a greater contrast with the shining gold around the figure.
Slightly after the middle of the sixth century. PLATE VI

24 *The Blue Angel*
2′ 3½″ × 3′ 10⅞″ (0·69 × 1·19 *m.*)
Part of the panel representing Christ in the midst of the sheep and the goats, presented respectively by a red and a blue angel. The latter is not only clothed in dark and pale blue, but also has blue wings and halo. Even the skin colour is modified by reflections from the dress and the red is toned with greys and blues. The goats are also blue and grey, and their coats have patches of white.
First decades of the sixth century.

25 *The Widow*
1′ 8⅞″ × 1′ 5″ (0·53 × 0·43 *m.*)
A detail from the panel on the left-hand wall, representing the widow's mite. She is clothed in a dark purple mantle which also covers her head.
First decades of the sixth century.

26 *Dove*

$9\frac{3}{4}'' \times 1'\ 1\frac{3}{4}''$ (0·25×0·35 *m.*)

This decorative motive is repeated over the windows of the central nave. The white dove, with grey and brown shadows, heightened by the red and orange beak and claws, is on a blue background.

First decades of the sixth century.

27 *Dove*

$11\frac{1}{4}'' \times 1'\ 1\frac{3}{8}''$ (0·30×0·34 *m.*)

Similar to No. 26.

First decades of the sixth century.

28 *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*

$3'\ 11\frac{5}{8}'' \times 5'\ 0\frac{1}{4}''$ (1·21×1·53 *m.*)

This panel is from the left-hand wall and contains a remarkable combination of colours. The background is gold, the water bluish-green, the ship yellow-green, and the net in which the fish are caught is a pinkish-grey. In the midst of these colours are the figures of Christ, in a purple cloak, of the Apostle who accompanies him, clothed in a white tunic and pallium, of St Peter, who is in the ship, hauling the net, in a short tunic, and of St Andrew who is at the helm.

First decades of the sixth century.

29 *The Last Supper*

$3'\ 10\frac{7}{8}'' \times 4'\ 10\frac{3}{4}''$ (1·19×1·49 *m.*)

A scene from the upper part of the right-hand wall of the central nave. Around a semi-circular table, on which is a plate with two large fishes, are placed the Apostles, side by side, clothed in white. Jesus, with a nimbus inscribed with a cross, and in a purple garment, is on the left and has just pronounced the memorable words, 'One of you shall betray me.' Opposite him is Judas towards whom seven of the Apostles look with reproach and sorrow, the others look at Jesus.

In the expression of the eyes and the different direction of the looks are concentrated the dramatic significance of this scene.

First decades of the sixth century.

30 *The Kiss of Judas*

$3'\ 10\frac{7}{8}'' \times 4'\ 9\frac{7}{8}''$ (1·19×1·47 *m.*)

This scene, from one of the panels on the right-hand wall, is dominated by the solemn figure of Christ, who awaits the station and kiss of the traitor, who is indicated by his averted look. There is a marked contrast in the colours of the dresses of the Apostles and the soldiers; the former white, whilst the others are variegated and bright. Jesus, as usual, is clothed in purple.

First decades of the sixth century.

31 *St Peter and the Damsel*

$3'\ 11\frac{5}{8}'' \times 4'\ 11\frac{3}{4}''$ (1·21×1·52 *m.*)

This scene represents the denial of St Peter. The servant has said to him: 'Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.' In this panel from the right-hand wall there is a remarkable variety of colours; from the red and orange of the tiles of Annas' house, which provides the background, and which is itself coloured a grey-violet, we pass to the white of the door-hanging and of St Peter's dress. The servant is in a cadmium yellow tunic, with a greenish mantle.

First decades of the sixth century.

32 *Detail from the Agony in the Garden*

1′ 6″×2′ 4¾″ (0·43×0·73 *m.*)

The group of six Apostles is on the right of Christ, who is higher up the mountain and has his arms in the gesture of an *orante*. The Apostles, clothed in white, are seated, and have their heads bent, overcome with sorrow. The background consists of the greyish-green earth of the hill, on which are some plants.
First decades of the sixth century.

33 *The Cock (St Peter's denial)*

10¼″×11½″ (0·26×0·29 *m.*)

The cock is on the top of a high pilaster in the centre of a panel from the right-hand wall, depicting the foretelling of the denial of St Peter. It is introduced to emphasize the prophecy. The cock, against a gold background, is richly coloured. Its plumes are green, brown and red. The pilaster, on which the bird is perched, is white and grey.
First decades of the sixth century.

34 *Figure of Victory*

1′ 2½″×2′ 0½″ (0·37×0·62 *m.*)

On the piers of the mosaic arches which represent the *Palatium* of Theodoric is a series of little figures representing Victories holding festoons. The figure represented here is on one of the piers of the loggia. It is placed on a white capital with grey modulations. The dress is blue-green, the flesh in cadmium yellow and pinkish violet.
We know from Cassiodorus that winged Victories were really represented in Theodoric's palace. This decorative detail leads us to suppose that the building represented in this mosaic is a faithful reproduction of the Gothic king's palace.
First decades of the sixth century.

35 *Detail from the Panel representing Jesus led to Judgment*

11¾″×1′ 0⅝″ (0·30×0·32 *m.*)

This compact group, on the right of Jesus when he is being led to judgment, represents the Scribes. These, in contrast to the Apostles, are in various coloured garments.
First decades of the sixth century.

36 *Detail from the Panel representing Jesus led to Judgment*

1′ 1″×10⅝″ (0·33×0·27 *m.*)

These figures represent the Scribes on the left of Jesus. Note, though only three, how closely they are grouped.
First decades of the sixth century.

37 *Detail of Caiphas*

1′ 1¾″×9½″ (0·35×0·24 *m.*)

The long-haired figure of Caiphas, in the panel, representing Jesus before the Sanhedrin, is in the midst of the high-priests, and wears a white pallium with purple bands, held at his breast by a large round pin in silver and gold.
First decades of the sixth century.

38 *Detail from the Panel representing the Samaritan Woman at the Well*
1′ 1¾″ × 10¼″ (0·35 × 0·26 *m.*)
First decades of the sixth century.

39 *Lunette with Christ and Two of the Apostles*
1′ 5″ × 1′ 10¾″ (0·43 × 0·58 *m.*)
Christ carries a cross and crushes the serpent. The two Apostles at his side are dressed in white. For the flesh colour of the hands, cadmium yellow has been used, which stands out against the white of the dresses. The background is gold. At the bottom is a green meadow on which are green plants, heightened with red and white flowers.
First decades of the sixth century.

S. VITALE

40 *The Panel representing the Empress Theodora and her Suite*
8′ 10¾″ × 13′ 6⅛″ (2·71 × 4·13 *m.*)
Dressed in a rich purple mantle and adorned with pearls and precious stones, the Empress Theodora leaves the throne room of her palace to make an offering of a gold chalice. She is preceded by two attendants, one of whom pushes back the curtain in front of the door with his hand, and gives the group the first indication of a slow movement towards the right. The Empress is followed by seven ladies, the first of whom is thought to be Antonina, the wife of Belisarius, and the second her daughter Joanna.
On a gold background, stand out sharply the different coloured robes of the court ladies, over whom curves a brightly coloured curtain. The gradations of colour are infinite, owing to the great variety of tones, and to the many slight variations to be found between the robes. It is interesting to note that in the lower edge of Theodora's mantle the artist has introduced a gold embroidery representing the offerings of the three Kings. An analogy has clearly been drawn between their offering and that which the august sovereign is about to accomplish.
All the figures are represented full-face; there is no realization of bodies under the dresses. We have here beings without depth, which in the end become almost abstract designs.
Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

FRONTISPIECE AND PLATE VII

41 *Group of Soldiers*
8′ 8″ × 3′ 11⅛″ (2·64 × 1·21 *m.*)
This group stands at the extreme left of the panel representing the Emperor Justinian, preceded by ecclesiastical dignitaries and court officials, and carrying a gold paten as an offering to the church. These are the bodyguards.
In the general colour scheme of this panel, dominated by large areas of the white and purple of the robes, and by the gold background, the clothing of the soldiers and the large shield, carried by one of them, introduce such sharply contrasted colours that they give the whole panel great vitality. The green, red and purple dresses of the soldiers are gold embroidered, and the lances which they carry in their left hands are also highly coloured. But the chief colour note is struck by the large oval shield, decorated with precious stones and coloured green, on which stands out the *chrismon* (the interlaced XP which represents the first two letters of the Greek name *Christos*). The centre of this monogram is covered by the round *episemis*, where are united all the colours of the rainbow.
Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

42 *Bust of the Emperor Justinian*

2′ 2¾″ × 1′ 8½″ (0·68 × 0·52 *m.*)

This detail comes from the same panel as No. 41. Justinian wears a purple mantle held at the right shoulder by a large pin, consisting of a great red stone set in pearls. These are represented by mother of pearl. Red, blue, green and pearl coloured stones also form the crown which the Emperor wears on his head. His rose coloured flesh has white reflections; his face stands out in the centre of the nimbus, which is outlined by a row of silver and red *tesserae*.

Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

43 *The Rebellious Israelites—Detail from Mosaic in the Choir*

3′ 7½″ × 4′ 9″ (1·10 × 1·45 *m.*)

At the foot of a mountain, whose precipices are edged with light and dark *tesserae*, is a group of people gesticulating and protesting vigorously. They are so closely grouped that of the figures behind only the tops of their heads can be seen. They number thirteen and are representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel with Aaron, their rebel leader. The group is remarkably full of movement. The faces, some bearded, others clean-shaven, are full-face, three-quarter and in profile.

Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

44 *Landscape Detail—Rocks*

6′ 8¼″ × 5′ 4½″ (2·04 × 1·64 *m.*)

This is part of the landscape behind Moses, who is receiving the Law on Mount Sinai from the hand of God. They are typical not only in their stylization, but also in their colours. The light green of the grass is divided by dark ridges which represent the peaks and the shadows. White reflections outline the surface of the rocks, the contours of the trees and the edge of the clouds.

Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

45 *The Lion*

3′ 9¾″ × 4′ 11½″ (1·15 × 1·51 *m.*)

The symbol of the Evangelist St Mark, who is represented on the right side of the choir. This mosaic is specially interesting for its colour, as well as in design. It is a yellow and brown patch on a background of greens and browns.

Slightly before the middle of the sixth century. PLATE X

46 *A Writing Desk*

1′ 4½″ × 1′ 10¾″ (0·42 × 0·58 *m.*)

This writing desk, with implements for writing, is beside the Evangelist St Matthew, on the right-hand wall of the choir. The smooth side of the board is purple, the edge and the supports have gold reflections. The ink bottle is grey-blue, and one of the pens is in white, and the other in gold. This interesting still-life contrasts with the surrounding landscape.

Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

47 *Head of an Angel*

2′ 4¾″ × 1′ 11½″ (0·73 × 0·59 *m.*)

This detail comes from the left-hand wall of the choir, where in the centre are represented the three angels to whom Abraham is ministering. This is the first of the three, the nearest to the tree, the leaves of which can be seen above the golden aureole, outlined with white *tesserae*. In the reddish face-colour the mouth stands out, and the lower lip has touches of cadmium yellow.

Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

48 *The City of Jerusalem*

3′ 1″×6′ 4¾″ (0·94×1·94 *m.*)

This is depicted on the left side of the great arch which divides the choir from the apse. It represents Jerusalem, HIERUSALEM, symbol of the *ecclesia ex circumcisione*, and is pendant to the city of Bethlehem, symbol of the *ecclesia ex gentibus*. Above the castellated walls can be seen the buildings of the symbolic town, nearby, on the gold background, is a cypress tree.

Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

49 *A Heron*

2′ 9⅞″×3′ 9¾″ (0·86×1·16 *m.*)

In the middle of a little lake of clear water, surrounded by steep and stylized rocks, is a white heron with long legs and long beak. From the rippling waters of the pond appear here and there small plants. This landscape detail is from the left of the choir, beneath the figure of the Evangelist St Luke.

Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

50 *A Heron and a Tortoise*

2′ 9⅞″×3′ 9¾″ (0·86×1·16 *m.*)

This landscape detail is from the right-hand wall of the choir, beneath the figure of the Evangelist St Matthew. The heron, with red beak and legs, has white highlights. There are similar reflections on the rocks and on the ripples in the water, from which emerge delicate little plants. The tortoise, grey-violet in colour, is surrounded by a row of dark green *tesserae*.

Slightly before the middle of the sixth century. PLATE XI

51 *Ducks*

1′ 9⅛″×2′ 10½″ (0·55×0·87 *m.*)

Two of these birds can be seen on the left-hand wall of the choir in the lower part of the landscape beneath the Evangelist St John. Their bodies are a purple-brown, their feet and beaks are red. The background is made up of different shades of green.

Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

52 *Waterfowl*

2′ 2″×5′ 8½″ (0·66×1·74 *m.*)

They are represented pecking at the foot of the rocks, from the right-hand wall of the choir, where the Evangelist St Mark is depicted.

Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

53 *A Basket of Fruit with Doves*

1′ 8½″×2′ 0½″ (0·52×0·62 *m.*)

This is a decorative detail from one of the piers of the arch which supports the great lunette on the right-hand wall of the choir. On the gold background is a wicker basket, on the edge of which are white and red reflections. The fruit, depicted in reddish marbles, have red centres. The doves are modelled in white and grey.

Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

54 *A Basket of Fruit with Parrots*

1′ 9⅛″×2′ 4¾″ (0·55×0·72 *m.*)

This decorative detail from the right-hand wall of the choir is similar to No. 53. The basket is green and

blue, it has white reflections in the centre and is greenish-grey at the edges. The parrots are in brilliant greens and blue-greens, the fruit in reddish marbles.
Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

55 *Detail from the Panel of the Emperor Justinian—Figure of the Archbishop Maximian*
2′ 0½″ × 1′ 6½″ (0·62 × 0·47 *m.*)

This is one of the most widely known figures in the Ravenna mosaics. The Archbishop's face is strikingly expressive and is no doubt a portrait. We are reminded of the description of this mosaic by the historian Andrea Agnello in his *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis: longeva statura, tenui corpore, macilentus in facie, modicos habuit capillos, oculos glaucos*, 'tall, slender, lean-faced, with a bald head surrounded by a few hairs, and with blue eyes'. During his episcopacy (546–56) the Archbishop consecrated the church of S. Vitale (547) and the basilica of S. Apollinare in Classe (549).
Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

S. APOLLINARE IN CLASSE

56 *The City of Bethlehem*
3′ 9¾″ × 5′ 11⅝″ (1·16 × 1·82 *m.*)

This is a detail from the arch in front of the apse. The city is on a gold background, with bluish and rose-red clouds alongside. Some of the surface is in neutral colour, obtained by using gilded *tesserae* in reverse. Notes of colour are given to the architectural mass by the openings in the walls, which are in green and blue. The gate is blue decorated with three white garlands. The chief characteristic of the buildings are the rounded roofs in red and orange-yellow.
Either seventh or ninth century.

57 *Symbol of the Evangelist St Luke*
4′ 11½″ × 5′ 7½″ (1·50 × 1·71 *m.*)

With the symbols of the other three Evangelists, this detail is depicted on the apsidal arch, in the middle of sparkling clouds, conventionally elongated. The bull, whose head is remarkable in design, carries on his hoofs a large book, the cover of which is enriched with precious stones. The nostrils are represented full-face, whilst the head is in profile.
Either seventh or ninth century. PLATE XII

58 *Detail of the Landscape surrounding St Apollinarius*
7′ 3⅜″ × 6′ 9⅞″ (2·22 × 2·08 *m.*)

A strangely modern conception, both in colour and in design, this detail is part of the landscape in which St Apollinarius stands, in the attitude of an *orante*, dominating the apse of the church dedicated to his honour. From the pale green at the bottom we pass to small stylized rocks, many of which are outlined in black or bright blue *tesserae*, and finally reach the luminous white notes made by the corollae of the flowers, surrounded with blue, and with yellow centres.
Slightly before the middle of the sixth century.

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